

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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TRSE-00 COME-00 ACDA-05 MC-02 /109 W
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P R 141910Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6836

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 1236

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, FR, SS, MO, AG

SUBJECT: QUAI COMMENTS ON SPANISH SAHARA, MOROCCO AND
ALGERIA

1. SUMMARY: QUAI OFFICER BELIEVES THE GROWING SPLIT
BETWEEN THIRD WORLD PROGRESSIVES AND MODERATE WILL
PERSIST. FRANCE'S "MATURE" RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO
WAS EVIDENCED BY THE FULL SUCCESS OF PM OSMAN'S VISIT.
MOROCCO FEIGNS VICTORY IN THE SAHARA BUT RECOGNIZES THE
PROBLEMS IT FACES IN CONTROLLING THE TERRITORY AND
FEARS ALGERIAN INTENTIONS. ON BALANCE, THE QUAI DOUBTS
ALGERIA WILL INITIATE A DIRECT CONFLICT, BUT THINKS IT
WILL CONTINUE TO BACK POLISARIO. THE RELATIVE ARMS
BALANCE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA MAY BE UPSET BY
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LIBYA (WHICH IS NOT ENTIRELY IN THE ALTERIAN CAMP) OR

THE USSR, A MORE DANGEROUS POSSIBILITY. THE FRENCH WONDER IF A WEAKENING POSITION AT HOME MAY BE BEHIND BOUMEDIENNE'S RECENT ATTACKS ON THEM. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO MASK THEIR MOROCCAN TILT AND TO BOLSTER THE FRANCO-ALGERIAN CONNECTION. THE DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO PROVIDE SOME INFORMATION. END SUMMARY.

2. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICA D'ALBIS ESTABLISHED THE SETTING FOR JAN. 13 TOUR D'HORIZON WITH EMBOFF BY ASSERTING THAT TWO IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ARE INCREASINGLY EVIDENT TODAY. ON THE ONE HAND, A CERTAIN NUMBER OF EX-COLONIES HAVE MATURED FROM THEIR POST-WORLD WAR II DEPENDENT MENTALITY AND NOW RPT NOW CAN DEAL ON A BASIS OF EQUALITY WITH EUROPEAN STATES. ON THE OTHER, COUNTRIES WHICH IN THE FLUSH OF INDEPENDENCE BURIED UNDER OAU AND OTHER LABELS THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH STILL-COMPLEXED THIRD WORLD STATES ARE NOT LONGER WILLING TO DO SO, AND HAVE REOPENED THE OLD SPLIT BETEEN THE CASABLANCA AND MONROVIA GROUPS, A DIVISION THAT IS LIKELY TO PERSIST.

3. FRANCE'S RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO (TUNISIA AND SENEGAL) FALL INTO THE "MATURE" CATEGORY AND IN CONSEQUENCE, ALBIS SAID, PRIME MINISTER OSMAN'S RECENT VISIT WAS "EXEMPLARY", ALTHOUGH HAD THE DATE NOT BEEN ARRANGED LONG AGO, THE FRENCH WOULD HAVE CHOSEN ANOTHER MOMENT. FINAL DETAILS OF THE MOROCCAN-EC ACCORD WERE IRONED OUT SO ITS SIGNATURE COULD BE TIMED WITH OSMAN'S VISIT. AT MOROCCAN INSISTENCE, THE FRENCH AGREED TO STUDY WAYS TO PRUCHASE MORE PHOSPHATE, ALTHOUGH ALBIS SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW THE GOF COULD DO SO GIVEN THE NON-COMPETITIVE PRICE OF MOROCCAN AS COMPARED WITH US PHOSPHATE. PROGRESS WAS MADE IN DISCUSSIONS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND INVESTMENT PROJECTS, NOTABLY A REFINERY AND PETRO-CHEMICAL COMPLEX. GIVEN MOROCCO'S ALREADY LARGE SHARE (10 TO 20 PERCENT) OF AVAILABLE FUNDS, THE FRENCH DISCOURAGED MOROCCAN REQUESTS FOR GREATER DIRECT FINANCIAL AID. IN THE FACE OF MOROCCO'S UNWILLINGNESS TO SHULDER PART OF THE BILL, THE FRENCH AGREED ONLY TO STUDY A REQUEST FOR GREATLY INCREASED NUMBERS OF "CO-CONFIDENTIAL

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OPERATNTS".

4. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE MOROCCANS MAINTAINED THE STANCE THAT THE SAHARA QUESTION WAS SETTLED AND THAT THE F. POLISARIO IS NO PROBLEM. HOWEVER, ALBIS SAID, MOROCCANS WERE CLEARLY WORRIED ABOUT THE ALGERIANS.

5. TURNING TO THE SAHARA, ALBIS NOTED THAT MOROCCO'S

PRONOUNCEMENTS AT THE TIME ITS TROOPS OCCUPIED VILLA CISNEROS APPEAR TO INDICATE THAT THE BORDER BETWEEN MOROCCAN AND MAURETANIAN ZONES IS RAPIDLY MOVING SOUTHWARD. WHILE MAURETANIA'S WEAKNESS MADE THIS UNDERSTANDABLE, HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALGERIA TO PLACE A WEDGE BETWEEN RABAT AND NOUAKCHOTT. ALBIS ADDED THAT POLISARIO'S ABILITY TO KIDNAP FRENCH "COOPERATNTS" WITHIN MOROCCO ITSELF HARDLY BETOKENS A MOROCCAN CAPACITY TO CONTROL ALL OF THE SAHARA, ALTHOUGH MOROCCO PROBABLY WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD SAHARAN VILLAGES, IF NOT TH COUNTRYSIDE. ANOTHER OMINOUS SIGN FOR MOROCCO WAS THE MOVEMENT OF PERHAPS 20,000 SAHARANS TO ALGERIA. MOROCCAN RECOGNITION OF THESE FACTS WAS REFLECTED IN RABAT'S FAILURE TO MOVE INTO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE SAHARA, THEREBY CREATING A BUFFER ZONE IN WHICH F. POLISARIO (AND PROBABLY) THE AGERIANS) OPERATE FREELY.

6. REGARDING ALGERIAN INTENTIONS, ALBIS THOUGHT THAT ON BALANCE, A DIRECT CONFLICT IS UNLIKELY. THE ALGERIAN REACTION OF RAGE AND RANCOR WAS PRIMARILY AN ATTEMPT TO COVER FAILURE IN THE SAHARA BY APPEALING TO REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOTISM. HOWEVER, ALGERIA IS STRENGTHENING ITS DEFENSES AND THE RELATIVE BALANCE BETWEEN MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN FORCES MAY BE UPSET.

7. IN THIS CONNECTION, ALBIS DISCOUNTED REPORTS THAT BOUMEDIENNE (IN A DESPERATE EFFORT TO OBTAIN REVOLUTIONARY ARAB BACKING) HAD GAINED LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR AN INDEPENDENT SAHARA. LIBYA'S POSITION IS AMBIGUOUS BUT QADDAFI WILL PROBABLY PROVIDE ARMS TO POLISARIO AND THE ALGERIANS. QADDAFI MAY ASPIRE TO THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR AND PROBABLY WANTS TO SPLIT MAURETANIA FROM MOROCCO.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARIS 1236

8. ALBIS THOUGHT SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS MORE DANGEROUS POSSIBILITY. FOR THE MOMENT, THE FRENCH BELIEVE THE SOVIETS, WHO ARE SAYING LITTLE ABOUT ALGERIA AND THE SAHARA IN THEIR PRESS, ARE HESITANT TO MOUNT A LARGE-SCALE EFFORT AS IN ANGOLA, BUT THIS COULD CHANGE. THE QUAI THINKS SOME SOVIET ARMS ORIGINALLY DESTINED FOR ANGOLA MAY HAVE REMAINED IN ALGERIAN AND IS ANXIOUS TO VERIFY THIS POINT.

9. TO QUESTIONS ABOUT FRANCO-ALGERIAN RELATIONS, ALBIS WAS NOT VERY FORTHCOMING. HE DESCRIBED THE LATEST ALGERIAN CHARGES ABOUT FRENCH COLLUSION IN EFFORTS TO TOPPLE THE REGIME AS FALSE AND BUT ANOTHER STEP IN THE ESCALATION OF ATTEMPTS TO TARNISH RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE WONDERED WHETHER BOUMEDIENNE MIGHT BE CONFIDENTIAL

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CASTIGATING FRANCE TO RALLY THE POPULATION (WHICH IS BASICALLY INDIFFERENT) IN ORDER TO BOLSTER HIS OWN POSITION, WHICH, ACCORDING TO RUMORS ONCE AGAIN CROPPING UP, HAS WEAKENED. HE HOPED THE TREATMENT THE ALGERIANS ACCORD TO VISITING FRENCH HOUSING MINISTER BARROT WOULD GIVE A CLUE TO THEIR REAL ATTITUDE.

10. COMMENT: DESPITE ALBIS' APPARENT SATISFACTION WITH THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE PROGRESSIVE/MODERATE SPLIT,

THE QUAI WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO KEEP ON GOOD TERMS WITH BOTH SIDES, AND ESPECIALLY WITH IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL STATES LIKE ALGERIA. HENCE WE MAY EXPECT THE FRENCH TO WORK HARD AT ALLAYING ALGERIAN SUSPICIONS BY, INTER ALIA, FURTHER DOWN-PLAYING THEIR BASICALLY PRO-MOROCCAN ATTITUDE IN THE SAHARAN DISPUTE.

1. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION WE MAY PASS TO THE QUAI ON SOVIET ARMS DELIVERS TO ALGERIA. OUR ASSESSMENT OF BOUMEDIENNE'S POSITION WOULD ALSO BE GREATLY APPRECIATED BY THE QUAI.
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